



Japan-Based Will Co. Sues Avgle.com for Copyright Infringement

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Oct 16, 2020 11:42 AM PDT

WASHINGTON — Japan-based adult entertainment company Will Co., Ltd. has filed a lawsuit against Avgle.com and its operators for infringing on 50 of its U.S.-registered copyrights.

Will's brands and trademarks include S1, Moodyz, Wanz Factory and Idea Pocket, and a rep described their product as "exploring and delivering sensuality and sexuality through artistic photography, video and erotic stories" since 2016.

Will's video library comprises over 50,000 full-length adult movies, featuring over 5,000 models shot by over 300 photographer and directors.

Will's complaint, filed in U.S. Federal Court in Washington, claims that Avgle.com operators ignored takedown notices, allowed anonymous uploads and have failed to implement a "repeat infringer" policy.

Avgle is a tube site focused on Asian content, with over 37 million visits a month, largely from Asia, according to SimilarWeb. Its name is a portmanteau of "AV" — the Japanese initials that denote "adult video" content — and "Google," whose logo Avgle seemingly imitated.

The complaint also accuses the website of placing a "a custom Avgle branded trailer at the beginning of videos uploaded" and "a custom Avgle branded watermark on the bottom right of the movie, implying an endorsement by or relationship with the actual content producer." Will also alleges Avgle inserts "a clickable link, denoted by an Avgle logo, on the top right of Will's movies unlawfully displayed on the Avgle Web Site [sic]."

An Unusual Lawsuit

This suit is unusual in that a Japan-based content producer is protecting their intellectual property in the United States. Will seeks damages of up to \$150,000 for infringement of each of the 50 works, a total of \$7.5 million. Will is further requesting that the court block U.S. users from accessing Avgle.com, and to embargo Avgle from being able to display Will content.

XBIZ spoke with Jason Tucker of copyright management firm Battleship Stance, which is advising Will Co. Tucker alleges that "Avgle operators chose to ignore takedown notices while making money from

content they know that they do not have a license to use.”

Tucker claims Avgle has been ignoring other studios as well. “Will Co. was not the first to notice the piracy on Avgle,” he said, “but they are the first to take action. My own research shows that one of the Avgle operators may reside in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and if he is under the Chinese 'Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles' ordinance, an operator of a website featuring pornographic material could face jail time and significant fines or worse.”

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